



CALIFORNIA STATE THREAT ASSESSMENT CENTER

24-HOUR REPORT

27 SEPTEMBER 2022

(U) CALIFORNIA

(U) Auburn – US Capitol Riot Defendant Rejects Plea Deal

(U) A Northern California man accused of assaulting officers with bear spray at the 6 January US Capitol Riot in Washington DC, has rejected a plea deal from prosecutors and is headed to trial in April 2023, meaning he will have spent nearly two years in custody when his trial on a 10-count indictment begins. Sean McHugh, an Auburn construction worker who is one of four Sacramento-area residents accused of crimes during the insurrection, appeared in court from jail by video Monday as his new attorney told a US District Judge that McHugh wants to face trial rather than take a deal. Lawyers have not disclosed the nature of the plea agreement offered McHugh, who could face up to 20-years in prison if convicted in the case. McHugh faces the most serious charges of the Sacramento-area defendants, with prosecutors describing his actions as pre-planned and deliberate.

SOURCE: 26 September 2022, [The Sacramento Bee](#)

(U) Menlo Park – Meta Disables Russian Propaganda Network

(U) A sprawling disinformation network originating in Russia sought to use hundreds of fake social media accounts and dozens of sham news websites to spread Kremlin talking points about the invasion of Ukraine, Meta revealed today. The company, which owns Facebook and Instagram, said it identified and disabled the operation before it was able to gain a large audience. Nonetheless, Facebook said it was the largest and most complex Russian propaganda effort that it has found since the invasion began. The operation involved more than 60 websites created to mimic legitimate news sites including The Guardian newspaper in the UK and Germany's Der Spiegel. Instead of the actual news reported by those outlets, however, the fake sites contained links to Russian propaganda and disinformation about Ukraine. More than 1,600 fake Facebook accounts were used to spread the propaganda to audiences in Germany, Italy, France, the UK and Ukraine.

SOURCE: 27 September 2022, [The San Diego Union-Tribune](#)

(U) San Diego – Fugitive Seeks Asylum in Venezuela

(U) Fugitive defense contractor nicknamed "Fat Leonard" who orchestrated a huge bribery scheme involving dozens of US Navy officials, has requested asylum in Venezuela, a law enforcement official said Monday, nearly a week after he was captured in the South American country. Leonard Glenn Francis owned Singapore-based Glenn Defense Marine Asia Ltd. or GDMA, that supplied food, water, and fuel to vessels for decades. He has acknowledged overbilling the US Navy by \$35 million with the help of dozens of US naval officers whom he supplied with prostitutes, Kobe beef, cigars, and other bribes so they would direct their ships to ports Francis controlled in the Pacific in Southeast Asia. Francis pleaded guilty in 2015 and faced up to 25-years in prison. While awaiting sentencing, he was given home confinement in San Diego to receive medical care as he cooperated with the prosecution, which led to the convictions of 33 of 34 defendants. US and Venezuelan officials said that Francis cut off his ankle monitor, fled to Mexico and then made his way to Cuba before turning up in Venezuela. He was arrested there Tuesday before he boarded a flight at the Simon Bolivar International Airport outside Caracas. Venezuelan officials have said he intended to reach Russia.

SOURCE: 27 September 2022, [The Mercury News](#)

(U) NATIONAL

(U) District of Columbia – Founder Of Oath Keepers Militia Goes on Trial for US Capitol Attack

(U) Washington DC – The trial of Stewart Rhodes, the founder of the far-right Oath Keepers militia, and four others begins on Tuesday in what will be the most high-profile case so far in the Justice Department's investigation into the 6 January 2021 attack on the US Capitol. Rhodes and his co-defendants Kelly Meggs, Thomas Caldwell, Jessica Watkins, and Kenneth Harrelson are the first people in more than 10-years to face federal charges of seditious conspiracy under a Civil War-era statute that is rarely prosecuted and carries a statutory maximum sentence of 20-years in prison.

SOURCE: 27 September 2022, [Reuters](#)

(U) Utah – Student Charged For Terrorism Threat During Football Game

(U) Salt Lake City – A University of Utah student was arrested and charged with making terrorist threats on 21 September after police said she threatened to detonate a nuclear reactor if the school's football team failed to win a game last Saturday. Charging documents filed in Salt Lake City allege the 21-year-old student posted threats before Utah's game against San Diego State University on Saturday, warning that she "was going to detonate the nuclear reactor that is located in the University of Utah causing a mass destruction." According to the charging documents, the student studied engineering and had knowledge of the university's nuclear reactor.

SOURCE: 22 September 2022, [Associated Press](#)

(U) INTERNATIONAL

(U) Australia– Optus Under Fire for Cyber Breach, Purported Hacker Claims Data Deleted

(U) Sydney – Australian telecoms giant Optus came under more fire from the government for a massive cyber breach, while an anonymous online account believed to be that of the hackers said it was deleting stolen data and withdrawing a \$1 million ransom demand. Singapore Telecoms-owned Optus, the country's second largest mobile operator, said last week that data of up to 10 million customers including home addresses, drivers' licenses and passport numbers had been compromised in one of Australia's biggest data breaches.

SOURCE: 26 September 2022, [Reuters](#)

(U) Brazil – Cops on Brazil's Campaign Trail Call for Backup as Violence Spikes

(U) Florianopolis – The day after a Workers Party (PT) official was shot dead by a supporter of far-right Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro in July, the Federal Police guarding his leftist campaign rival sent a classified memo to senior colleagues across Brazil. They were calling for backup. The officers warned that former President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva's safety was threatened by "radicalized opponents," increasingly armed with deadly weapons due to Bolsonaro's loosening of gun controls. They asked the top Federal Police officers in each state to reinforce Lula campaign events with bulletproof cars, tactical teams, drones, and intelligence reports.

SOURCE: 27 September 2022, [Reuters](#)

(U) Russia – Kremlin Reports Sabotage Cannot Be Ruled Out as Reason for Nord Stream Damage

(U) Moscow – The Kremlin said on Tuesday that it cannot rule out sabotage as a reason behind damage to the Russia-built network of Nord Stream pipelines which sprung unexplained leaks in the Baltic Sea. The pipelines, designed to bring gas from Western Siberia's Yamal Peninsula directly to Germany, Europe's biggest economy, have been the focus of an energy war between Russia and its traditional

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European clients over the conflict in Ukraine. Nord Stream AG, the operator of the network, said earlier on Tuesday that three offshore lines of the Nord Stream gas pipeline system sustained "unprecedented" damage in one day.

SOURCE: 27 September 2022, [Reuters](#)

(U) Russia – Putin Grants Russian Citizenship to Edward Snowden

(U) Moscow – President Vladimir Putin on Monday granted Russian citizenship to former US intelligence contractor Edward Snowden, nine years after he exposed the scale of secret surveillance operations by the National Security Agency (NSA). Snowden, 39, fled the United States and was given asylum in Russia after leaking secret files in 2013 that revealed vast domestic and international surveillance operations carried out by the NSA, where he worked. Snowden's name appeared without Kremlin comment in a Putin decree conferring citizenship on 72 foreign-born individuals.

SOURCE: 26 September 2022, [Reuters](#)

(U) PREPARED BY THE CALIFORNIA STATE THREAT ASSESSMENT CENTER.

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